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March 16, 2009

Thomas P. Gaffey, Co-Chair
Andrew M. Fleishmann, Co-Chair
Education Committee
Room 3100, Legislative Office Buildingz
Hartford, CT 06106

Regarding Raised Bill # 6666, Section 7

An act requiring School Districts to utilized Board Certified Behavior Analysts when an individual education plan includes applied behavior analytic services as part of a students special education.

To Whom It May Concern:

We are parents of a child with Autism and we are in support of Raised Bill # 6666, Section 7. We support this bill because it is necessary to ensure that children with autism receive a free and appropriate education implemented by qualified personal. Not only do autistic children have extreme learning deficiencies, but they typically have difficult behavioral issues that can hinder everything – including being capable of attending to even one task. A teacher dealing with these issues on a daily basis **MUST** be properly qualified to implement an appropriate program for an autistic child's education or the child will NOT be able to absorb anything!!! This is tragic, but unfortunately, very real and true.

For the last year, our daughter has been fortunate enough to have a BCBA teacher in her classroom everyday and she has made unbelievable strides forward, as a result. An autistic child can lose skills within a few days if not taught consistently. Therefore, a consultant attending the class a couple times per week is **NOT** sufficient enough for these children to learn properly and continue to build on their new skills. If these children are not acquiring new skills....and falling further and further behind...**it is simply wasted time!!** We have to remember that the more skills our children can acquire now, the less intense and restricted the facilities will need to be when these children are older. The approval of this bill will not only help save these children now; it will only help them and all of us as they grow older.

Sincerely,

Susan and Louis Cozzi